

College of Charleston

Charleston, SC • Public School



The most comprehensive guide to free speech on campus — anywhere

Because a true university education requires freedom of expression.

The College Free Speech Rankings are based on student surveys, campus policies, and recent speech-related controversies.

OVERALL RANK

178 ▲

/257

▲ 26 FROM 2024

GRADE

F

— F FROM 2024

SPEECH CONTROVERSIES

0

— 0 FROM 2025

Overview

The College of Charleston ranks 178 out of 257 schools in the 2026 College Free Speech Rankings. The school earns a score of 56, an F speech climate grade.

Student perceptions place the college in the top 25 on “Disruptive Conduct,” indicating relatively more students reject shout-downs or blockades. Nearly every other measure, however, shows serious trouble: the campus ranks in the bottom 50 for “Comfort Expressing Ideas” and “Self-Censorship,” and in the bottom 25 for “Openness” to discussing specific controversial topics.

Charleston could make quick progress by revising its policies to replace the current “yellow light” Spotlight rating with a “green light,” as well as by formally adopting the Chicago Statement and an official commitment to institutional neutrality.

Spotlight Rating

Yellow

FIRE’s Spotlight database annually rates regulations on student expression based on the extent to which they restrict free speech.

If you are a school administrator and would like to discuss your rating, reach out to speechcodes@thefire.org.

Visit our website: <https://rankings.thefire.org/> for more information.

HIGHLIGHTS



54% of students say they have self-censored on campus at least once or twice a month.



61% of students say shouting down a speaker to prevent them from speaking on campus is acceptable, at least in rare cases.



25% of students say using violence to stop someone from speaking on campus is acceptable, at least in rare cases.

1.55:1

There are roughly 1.55 liberal students for every one conservative student.

Institutional Neutrality

NOT ADOPTED



Chicago Statement for Free Speech

NOT ADOPTED



SCORE DEEP DIVE

COMFORT EXPRESSING IDEAS

D-

▼ DECREASE

DISRUPTIVE CONDUCT

B

▲ INCREASE

OPENNESS

D

▲ INCREASE

SELF-CENSORSHIP

F

▲ INCREASE

ADMINISTRATIVE SUPPORT

F

NEUTRAL

POLITICAL TOLERANCE

F

▼ DECREASE

SCHOLARS UNDER FIRE

O

STUDENTS UNDER FIRE

O

DEPLATFORMINGS

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